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INFLUENCE OF THE ATONEMENT ON THE BELIEVER'S CONSCIENCE.

HEB. IX. 13, 14.—*If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*

THE law of Moses was but a shadow of good things to come. It could do little more than watch over the infancy of true religion, and keep alive the hope of a new and far better dispensation. It consulted the infirmities of man; it wore a drapery adapted to his senses; its rites belonged to the twilight of an early age; and all its types were designed only to prefigure the realities of a brighter and more glorious era. It was but a pioneer of Christianity; a schoolmaster to teach a few of its elementary principles, and thus prepare mankind for a prompt and cordial reception of the Gospel.

But aside from this prospective connection with Christianity, had the ritual of Moses any power to sanctify and save? It did indeed prescribe rites to cleanse the body from ceremonial impurities; but could it purify the soul, and provide an antidote, or anodyne, for the anguish of a wounded spirit? It taught that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins; but was it possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away the sting of guilt? Could all the gifts and sacrifices, prescribed in the law of Moses, make the comers thereunto perfect, and disarm a guilty and exasperated conscience of its power to disturb the sinner's peace? No; the

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blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, could sanctify only to the purifying of the flesh; but the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself a spotless victim for the sins of mankind, speaketh far better things than the blood of ancient sacrifices, and has a power to purge the conscience from dead works, and put an end for ever in the believer's bosom to those pangs of remorse which so naturally attend the commission of sin.

Let us then dwell on this grand peculiarity of the Gospel, and consider THE INFLUENCE OF THE ATONEMENT IN RELIEVING THE BELIEVER'S CONSCIENCE FROM THE ANGUISH OF REMORSE, and thus preparing him to serve and enjoy God for ever.

We are all more or less acquainted with the nature of remorse. It is the natural consequence of sin. It is inseparable from guilt, and springs from the very constitution of man.

"No being, once created rational,
With sapience of right and wrong endowed,
However drunk, delirious and mad
With sin's full cup, or with whatever cursed,
Unnatural diligence he work and toil,
Can banish goodness from his sight, or once
Forget that she is fair. Hides he in night,
In central night? Takes he the lightning's wing,
And flies for ever on beyond the bounds
Of all? Drinks he the maddest cup of sin?
Dives he beneath the ocean of despair?
He dives, he drinks, he flies, he hides in vain;
For still the eternal beauty, image fair!
Once stamped upon the soul, before the eye
All lovely stands, and as he looks, and must
For ever look upon her loveliness,
Remembrance dire of what he was, of what
He might have been, and bitter sense of what
He is, polluted, ruined, hopeless, lost,
With most repenting torment rend his heart."

Every where may we discover the traces of a guilty conscience. Why did the heathen offer the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls? Why did even the mother throw her own child into the burning arms of Moloch, and smile with a sort of fiendish satisfaction as she saw the flames curling around it, and heard its last expiring shriek? Why do pagans still continue these inhuman sacrifices, and inflict on themselves tortures sufficient to make a savage shudder and weep? It is all to satisfy the demands

of an accusing conscience, and shows with what tremendous severity it often sways and scourges the soul.

Every day witnesses the secret workings of remorse. Why does the reckless mariner in the hour of danger call upon his God, and strangely mingle his prayers with his blasphemies? What makes even the unsuspected villain turn pale at the looks of virtuous men? What drives the murderer to his dark, lonely den, and there causes him to start so often from his unquiet slumbers, and tremble at the whistling of the wind, at the rustling of a leaf, at the throbbing of his own guilty bosom? What fills the awakened sinner with such anguish of spirit, and overwhelms him in a dying hour with horror and despair? It is conscience stirring within him, and "harrowing up his soul with the iron tooth of remorse."

"The mind that broods o'er sinful deeds,
Is like a scorpion girt by fire.
In circles narrowing as it glows,
The flames around the captive close,
Till inly parched by thousand throes,
And maddening in his ire.
So does the guilty soul expire,
Alike to scorpion girt by fire;
So writhes the mind remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, undoomed to heaven:
Darkness above, despair beneath;
Around it, flame; within—'tis death."

But have we not all felt in our own bosom the workings of a guilty conscience? Have we never done, or said, or thought, or felt any thing that filled us for a time with bitter remorse? Did conscience never reproach us as offenders against God? Alas! when we reflect on our manifold and aggravated transgressions of his holy law; when we remember how many duties we have neglected, and how many sins we have committed; when we think how much goodness we have abused, how many means of grace we have failed to improve, and how many motives to repentance we have wilfully resisted, or carelessly disregarded; we can easily conceive, though we may never ourselves have felt, those paroxysms of remorse, those horrors of despair, which made the dying chambers of a Newport and an Altamont a very vestibule of perdition!

Such is the natural and necessary connection of sin with the miseries of remorse. Is it possible then to separate them, and dry up this fountain of unmingled and everlasting woe? If sin will be followed sooner or later by remorse, then must conscience be disarmed of its sting, or we shall all be-

come a hopeless prey to the worm that dieth not. But can this be done? The sinner has put the scorpion of remorse in his own bosom; and is it possible now to lull this undying scorpion asleep, or disarm it of its power, or neutralize the venom of its sting?

Yes; thanks to redeeming grace! it can be done. The Bible tells us so; and it has actually been done in the case of every Christian on earth, and every saint in heaven. Go to the new convert, and behold his bosom, once writhing in all the anguish of remorse, now calm as the surface of an unruffled lake, and enjoying a peace of conscience, a repose of soul, a joy of heart that pass all understanding. Attend the Christian in his progress from one degree of perfection to another, until he attains the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. Visit his closet, and there witness his seasons of intimate and delightful communion with his heavenly Father. Accompany him through all the scenes of his earthly pilgrimage; mark his peaceful, triumphant departure from a world of sin and sorrow; follow him up to those realms of light where all tears are wiped from every eye, and there gaze on the countless throng of saints, once weeping in the bitterness of godly sorrow for their sins, but now redeemed by the blood of Christ from all the miseries of remorse, and prepared to serve and enjoy God for ever with the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands that compose the general assembly and church of the first born in heaven.

Thus does the Gospel deliver the penitent believer in Jesus from the pangs of remorse so naturally consequent upon sin. But how is this done? Is it by *dethroning or destroying his conscience*? Is the Christian exempted from compunction for the sins which he continues to commit? Could David or Peter, after their conversion, sin without remorse? No; they felt it far more keenly than an impenitent sinner could have done. No unbeliever has a conscience so enlightened, so sensitive, or so faithful as that of the Christian. And will he not carry his conscience with him into eternity? Yes; and should the highest saint or seraph in heaven indulge one sinful thought, it would kindle a hell in his bosom, even amid all the glories that encircle the throne of God and the Lamb.

Is the Christian, then, relieved from remorse by *forgetting his sins*? But has he forgotten them? Does he not retain a most vivid recollection of them even when rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory? Go to the recent convert; and when you see his bosom thrilling with the raptures of a better world, ask him then, whether he has forgotten his past transgressions. The tears through which his joy smiles, will return you an answer.

Does the saint, amid the bright and blissful visions of his dying hour, become unconscious of his past and present sins? Will he in heaven retain no remembrance of a world so long filled with the bounties of divine Providence, and all the matchless wonders of redeeming grace? Will the saints in glory forget all their former ingratitude and rebellion? No; they will remember them for ever, and gather from them all fresh motives to warm their bosoms with love, and strike louder and still louder notes of praise to him who died to save them from the power and penalties of sin.

Is the Christian, then, freed from the corrosions of remorse *by becoming unconscious of ill-desert*? But is it possible for a pardoned sinner, a penitent believer in Jesus, ever to lose his consciousness of deep demerit? Can the man who has been led to inquire with agonizing solicitude, what he must do to be saved; can the publican who has smitten on his breast and cried, *God be merciful to me a sinner*; can the prodigal, who has returned with a broken, bleeding heart, to confess, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son*; can the saint who frankly and penitently acknowledges, *Against thee, O God, against thee only have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest*;—can such men ever cease to be conscious of their ill-desert? No; never. Their consciousness of demerit is interwoven with almost every recollection of their life, and implied even in their gratitude to that grace which has redeemed them from the miseries of sin. No man on earth can be more thoroughly conscious of his ill-desert than the Christian; and every saint in heaven, even while joining in the song of Moses and the Lamb, must feel as truly as any sufferer in hell, that he too deserves to be lifting up his eyes in the endless torments of remorse and despair!

In none of these ways, then, can the burden of conscious guilt be removed. Still the Gospel does remove it from the conscience of every penitent believer, and permit him to rejoice in the favor of a reconciled God. But how does the blood of Christ thus purify and relieve his conscience?

I. BY PREPARING THE WAY FOR HIS REPENTANCE, AND HIS ULTIMATE DELIVERANCE FROM ALL SIN.

This purification is absolutely essential. Sin produces misery as its natural, inevitable result; and the sinner must therefore become holy, before he can be happy. Repentance is the beginning of holiness; and so far as it makes the sinner holy, it tends to promote his happiness. It cannot indeed alter the fact of his having been a sinner; nor can it ever

destroy the remembrance, or conscious guilt of his past transgressions; but it will check the progress of sin, and thus prevent the future increase of its miseries.

Mere law, however, makes no provision for repentance; nor could it consistently permit the pardon even of a penitent transgressor. It is a system of pure, unmingled, uncompromising justice. It acknowledges no principle but that of righteous retribution; it denounces death to the man who offends in a single point; and the soul that sinneth but once, can never live again under a system of mere law. A single deviation from this principle would destroy the influence of the divine government, and lead its subjects to calculate on impunity in transgression, and ere long to set at defiance the moral Governor of the universe. God has also rendered the ultimate execution of his law absolutely certain, by giving man such a conscience, or moral constitution, that the sinner, if unrenewed, must ere long suffer the pangs of remorse, just as inevitably as arsenic poisons, or fire burns.

But the Gospel so far modifies the government of mere law, as to prepare a way for the consistent reformation and forgiveness of sinners. It renders repentance possible, encourages it by the promise of pardon, and provides means, motives, and divine influences sufficient to restore the sinner to the lost image of his Maker. The believer's spiritual renovation is begun at the time of his conversion; it is carried on from one degree of perfection to another; and ere long will be consummated in the perfect purity and bliss of heaven.

I am fully aware, however, that repentance alone can never restore the sinner to the favor of his Maker; because it cannot repair the evils he has done to God, to himself, and the universe. Can mere penitence undo what sin has done? Can the assassin's sorrow heal the heart he has stabbed? Will the incendiary's tears of regret quench the fires he has kindled? Can the reformation of a drunkard reclaim all whom his example may have made the victims of intemperance, or rescue from an untimely grave his abused and broken-hearted companion, or fully restore his own lost reputation, his squandered property, his wasted health, his shortened days, or the scorched and withered sensibilities of his soul? The late imperial ravager of Europe might, at the close of his bloody career, have wept bitterly for what he had done; but could tears even of blood, call back to life the millions sacrificed on the shrine of his mad ambition, and repair all the unnumbered evils he had done? Alas! these evils had gone far, far beyond his reach; and now he could only wait in fearful

expectation of meeting the victims of his reckless spirit before a higher than human tribunal, and there receiving a sentence according to the deeds he had done on earth.

How utterly impossible then, for repentance alone to repair the evils of sin! An angel once formed the purpose of rebellion against God; and from that single purpose have resulted all the sins and all the miseries we have witnessed, or of which we have been told, throughout the dominions of Jehovah. The spirit of disaffection and revolt spread wide in heaven and earth; and had it not been checked by an almighty hand, it might have extended through the universe—made it one general theatre of rebellion—one boundless hell. Could the penitence then of the first rebel have atoned for evils so immense, so appalling, so interminable?

True, a sinner on earth could not do so much mischief; but has he not joined this foul and desperate conspiracy against the Majesty of heaven, and done all that his powers would permit to break that golden chain which binds intelligent creatures to the throne of God? Yes, he has acted on a principle which, if universally adopted, would dethrone Jehovah, destroy all happiness, and fill the universe with sin and wo.

Well may the sinner weep in view of all this; but can his tears repair the evil he has done? Alas! that has gone beyond his reach; it may diffuse its baleful influence through the world; it may go to millions of worlds, and myriads of beings unknown to him; and God alone knows where it will stop, or how its terrible ravages can be checked. Here is what the sinner himself can never undo, nor ever repair; but after having opened such a flood-gate of sin and misery, can his conscience find repose, unless he sees these evils counteracted and overruled to the glory of God, and the greatest good of his kingdom?

II. Here the atonement of Christ comes to relieve the believer's conscience BY COUNTERACTING THE EVILS OF SIN. •

We may not see all, but we can easily see some of the ways, in which this great expiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind may prevent, or repair the evils of transgression. Sin tends to tarnish the character of God, to shake the stability of his throne, and destroy the influence of his moral government over his intelligent creatures. Had he permitted a single sinner to go unpunished without providing some other means equally effec-

tual to express his abhorrence of sin, and immutable regard for his law, his subjects might have suspected him of conniving at transgression—deemed him altogether unworthy of their love and obedience, and calculated on sinning with impunity. The pardon of a single sinner, under such circumstances, might have endangered the welfare of the whole universe. And what penitent man could desire to be saved at the certain hazard of such consequences? Would he go up to heaven trampling on the ruins of God's throne, and on all the interests of his moral kingdom? Could he be willing to destroy the confidence of intelligent creatures in the government of God, and thus poison the very fountain from which all happiness flows? Thus do the general interests of his kingdom absolutely require, that God should preserve the moral influence of his law, either by inflicting its penalty on the transgressor, or by devising some other expedient of equal power to maintain his authority, secure the obedience of his subjects, and accomplish all the other purposes of his moral government.

Such an expedient is the death of Christ. It counteracts the evils which sin had done or threatened, and thus becomes a sufficient and satisfactory substitute for the penalty of the law. It upholds the authority of Jehovah, confirms the moral influence of his government, and accomplishes even more important results than could have been secured by inflicting all the penalties of the law on transgressors. It expresses in the strongest manner God's deep and unchanging abhorrence of sin, his steady regard for his law, and his inflexible determination to preserve its influence unimpaired, by enforcing all its claims and all its sanctions. If he spared not his only Son, but from his own bosom gave him up even to the death of the cross, rather than relax one iota of that law on which are suspended the dearest interests of the universe, can any of his subjects now hope for impunity in transgression? If God spared not his own Son, will he spare the impenitent rebel against his throne?

Thus does the death of Christ counteract the evils of sin. It restores to the violated law all its moral energies, repairs the injury done by sin to the character and government of God, and prepares the way for him consistently with all his attributes, with the honor of his throne, and the great interests of his kingdom, to pardon every one that believeth in Jesus.

III. BUT THE ATONEMENT DOES EVEN MORE THAN REPAIR THE EVILS OF SIN. By this I cannot surely mean, that it will restore to the favor of God more than all, or even all that have sinned; but that it will event-

nally bring more glory to God, and a greater amount of happiness to the universe, than would have resulted from the punishment of every transgressor, or even the prevention of sin itself.

I know very well how difficult it is for us to conceive of such a result being accomplished without restoring every sinner to the image and favor of God. We are so engrossed with the interests of our own little world, as to overlook other parts of the universe, whose welfare, equally with our own, depends on the character and government of him who doeth his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth. But reflect on the vast extent of his dominions, and the countless number of his subjects. When we look abroad over the wide fields of creation, and imagine the whole immensity of space filled with planets, suns, and systems, can we suppose that a God of infinite wisdom has spread out all those glories merely for a puny race of rebels to gaze upon and admire? Are all yon myriads of worlds but one boundless scene of barren, unpeopled waste? Is our little world, whose very destruction would be felt amid the immensity of his other works, no more than the loss of a single grain of sand by our globe itself, the only spot in all the dominions of Jehovah, that teems with life, intelligence, and joy? I cannot believe it; but feel constrained by the strongest reasons, to suppose, that those countless planets, suns, and systems, are all peopled with intelligent creatures of God, whose happiness, like our own, depends on his character, on the stability of his throne, and the moral influence of his government. Ought he, then, to overlook all his other subjects, and confine his regards to the few grovelers on this dark, and distant, and paltry footstool? Is he not bound, as an impartial Sovereign, to consult alike the interest of all worlds? Shall he, for the gratification of a few hell-deserving rebels, sacrifice or endanger the happiness of all the unfallen beings scattered through his boundless empire?

Consider, then, the vast extent to which the atonement of Christ may diffuse more or less of its benign influences. Its *redeeming efficacy* is probably confined to our world; but *the story of its wonders* will be known through the universe; and so far as it displays the glory of God, and strengthens the moral influence of his government, just so far will it tend to promote the holiness and felicity of all his faithful subjects.

And is not this the actual effect of the atonement? Yes; it makes a new and most glorious display of that character which forms the confidence, hope, and joy of the whole universe. It develops traits which must

otherwise have been for ever concealed from the view of God's creatures. They had before witnessed his power as Creator; they had acknowledged his authority as Lawgiver; they had felt his kindness as a parent to his obedient children; they had also seen him, as a righteous Governor, rewarding his faithful subjects, and punishing the rebels against his throne; but had they beheld, or could they, without an atonement, have ever beheld his justice and mercy consistently united in pardoning transgressors, and restoring them to the full and everlasting enjoyment of his favor? Here was the master-work of Jehovah; and from the cross of Christ is poured upon his character an effulgence of light and glory, that could never have beamed from the mightiest works of his hand, or even the brightest radiance of his throne.

Pause for a moment on this glorious theme. When the Father gave up to death his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life; when he who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, because he was the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, and himself God over all blessed for ever, left his throne on high to take upon him the form of a servant, and become obedient even unto the death of the cross; when he thus stooped from heaven to the manger, agonized in the garden, and on Calvary bore the mighty burden of a world's atonement, in order to open a way whereby God could be just, and yet justify every one that believeth;—was not here such a blended display of his mercy and justice as must send a thrill of admiration through the entire universe of intelligent and holy beings? If the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy at the birth of creation, with what emotions of wonder, and love, and bliss must the bosoms of all his faithful subjects glow on beholding the operations and results of redeeming grace! May not the Gospel thus promote, to an extent altogether inconceivable, the holiness and felicity of the universe? May not its blessed results far outweigh all the evils that sin will ever inflict on the comparatively small number of its unreclaimed victims?

Thus may we imperfectly see how the death of Christ prepares the way for the restoration of mankind to the image and favor of God. It modifies his moral government over our world, and adapts it to our ruined condition. It provides a power to renew men to his image, an anodyne for the anguish of remorse, and a sovereign remedy for all the maladies of sin: It renders our repentance possible; it furnishes means sufficient for our entire purification; it not only counteracts and repairs the evils of sin, but accomplishes additional purposes of great importance to the general interests of the uni-

verse; and thus does it render our salvation not only consistent with the justice of God, but subservient to his glory, and the happiness of his whole moral kingdom. Our forgiveness now infringes on no principle of his administration. Our salvation, so far from tarnishing the lustre of his character, shaking the stability of his throne, or putting in jeopardy the great interests of his kingdom, tends to display his perfections, to enhance his glory, to increase the moral influence of his law, and promote the holiness and happiness of all his obedient subjects.

Here may the believer's spirit find repose. Here his conscience sweetly rests in the arms of a reconciled and forgiving God. He may and must remember his sins; but the scorpions of remorse, disarmed by the blood of Christ, have lost their power to sting. The evils of sin repaired by his Redeemer, the glory of God, and the interests of his kingdom promoted by his salvation; his own spirit freed for ever from the dominion of depravity, and the anguish of conscious guilt; what now can ever disturb the happy repose of his soul? Shame and confusion of face he may—he *must* accord to himself; but with what emotions of gratitude, love, and joy will his bosom glow as he dwells on the wonders of that grace which can raise even the chief of sinners to mansions of eternal bliss, and there put in his mouth a new and never-ceasing song of praise to the Lamb that was slain to redeem him by his own blood!

I cannot, however, suppose that every Christian understands the precise manner in which the death of Christ accomplishes these glorious results; but his filial spirit rests in the simple assurance of the Bible, that God will in some way render the salvation of every penitent believer in Jesus consistent with his own glory, with the principles of his government, and all the interests of his moral kingdom. The subject is, indeed, peculiarly mysterious. I tremble, and yet am eager to examine it; but I would not, in the twilight of this world, push my inquiries any farther than just to sooth the solicitude which I cannot help feeling on a point so essential to my peace of conscience here, and all my hopes of happiness hereafter. I cannot penetrate to the bottom of a subject so fathomless; and I deem it quite possible, and perhaps probable, that the atonement of Christ operates on the believer's conscience in a way unknown to us, and at present beyond our power fully to comprehend.

But whatever be the way, I know—and this is enough for any of us to know—that the blood of Christ does relieve the believer's conscience from remorse, and leave him to enjoy the full and everlasting favor of

God. The Bible tells me so; every saint on earth and in heaven knows it by his own experience; God himself has kindly condescended to assure me of it; and may not my spirit safely rest in such an assurance? Is not God able in some way to purify and relieve my conscience? Can he not render my salvation consistent with the attributes of his character, with the honor of his throne, and all the great interests of his kingdom? He assures me, that he has done so, and with this assurance I can cheerfully wait, until eternity shall pour the full blaze of its light and glory on all the deep mysteries of redemption.

But let no man, on account of my present imperfect acquaintance with the subject, dissuade me from attaching so much importance to the cross of Christ. Say not that his death can never lead to results so mighty. Tell me not that the babe of Bethlehem could never have acted a part so conspicuous in the history of the universe; and that our world itself is too narrow a spot—too small and distant a nook in Jehovah's boundless empire, for a transaction of such importance as to attract, for ever, the delighted and admiring gaze of all his holy subjects. I know very well, how often philosophy has been staggered by the preaching of Christ crucified. But shall I distrust my Bible just at the point where my reason fails me? Shall I abandon my divine guide merely because he leads me where I could not have gone without his guidance? If the weakness of human reason could not discover how the death of Christ will produce results so immensely important, not only to fallen man, but to all the unfallen subjects of Jehovah, shall I question the possibility of its producing these great and glorious results? It was a small act, a feeble hand that plucked the forbidden fruit; but it ruined a world. When the Savior was born, few among the sons of men paused in their worldly pursuits to gaze upon his manger-cradle; but angels, who had been wont to bow before his throne on high, came from their celestial abodes to hail his birth; and they raised a sweeter song of glory to God and good will to men, than ever before had met the ear of earth or heaven. When he expired on the cross, scarcely any, save the rending rocks, and quaking earth, and weeping heavens, sympathized with the dying Lamb of God; but his death changed the entire prospects of our world for eternity; it will most deeply affect the moral interests of the whole universe; and on it will all the hosts of heaven for ever dwell, as the most wonderful and most important event that ever occurred in the dominions of Jehovah.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Let the Christian then *dwell with devout admiration on the cross of Christ*. Begin on earth what you hope to continue for eternity. Meditate on the glories of his character—on the wonders of his love, and all the benign influences which his death will exert, not only on the destinies of our world, but on the great interests of the whole universe. Imitate the angels who desire to look into these things, and catch the spirit of the innumerable hosts around the throne of God, who cry, “Worthy is the Lamb to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing; for thou hast redeemed us by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests for ever.”

2. *Make the cross of Christ, also, a source of consolation.* It is the great fountain of blessings to a guilty and self-ruined race. It is the surest antidote against the ills of life; the sweetest solace of our earthly sorrows; the only balm for a wounded spirit; the last cordial for the fears of guilt and the phrensies of despair. Here rest until the storms of life shall have passed over, and left before you the bright and cloudless sunshine of a blessed eternity. Cling, like the saints of better days, to the precious and consoling truth of Christ crucified for our redemption, and bearing our sins in his own body on the cross. Let it be to you, as it was to them, a source of peace and unfailing joys. It comforted them amid the loss of all things; it made them welcome toil, reproach, and danger; it cheered them amid all the horrors of the dungeon, and enabled them to smile and sing even amid the flames of the stake and the tortures of the cross. Then imitate the martyr, and bind the Savior’s dying love to your heart. It will assuage your remorse; it will sooth all the sorrows of your earthly pilgrimage; it will give you many a sweet foretaste of those joys which eye hath not seen; it will cheer you even in that hour when flesh and heart fail you; and when you reach those mansions which a risen Redeemer hath gone to prepare, you will delight to join with saints and angels in admiring the wonders of that grace which made the cross of Christ the gateway to heaven for a fallen race, and his death the source of so much happiness to the whole universe.

3. *Use this precious truth, also, as a means of promoting your spiritual improvement.* Dwell upon the death of Christ until your heart is melted into penitence, gratitude, and love. Think of what he has done for you, until you are willing to do, and sacrifice, and suffer any thing for him. Meditate on the glory he had with the Father before the world was, and think how low he stooped to reach and redeem a fallen world. Think on the lowly

manger of his birth ; think on his life of toil, reproach, and sorrow ; think on his prayers, his tears, and bloody sweat in the garden ; think on all the untold, inconceivable agonies of his cross ; think on the sepulchre through which he passed to prepare for you mansions of celestial and everlasting bliss ; think on all these until your heart melts in godly sorrow for your sins, and your bosom glows with the warmest emotions of gratitude, love, and praise.

4. Let me also assure the awakened sinner, *that his burden of guilt can be removed only by applying to that blood which will purge his conscience from dead works to serve the living God.* Are you oppressed with such a sense of sin and ill-desert, as leads you to inquire with deep solicitude what you must do to be saved ? When you consider how long you have lived without God, or prayer, or hope ; how long you have enjoyed the bounties of his providence, and all the privileges of his grace, without making any returns of gratitude and love ; how often you have broken his law, slighted his gospel, and done despite unto his Spirit ; does your conscience in view of all this smite you ? How then can you silence its reproaches ? You may pray—you *must* pray ; but will your prayers hush its clamors ? You may, and must weep in godly sorrow ; but can even such tears wash the stains of guilt from your soul ? You may renounce your sins, and live a new life ; but can even an entire change of character erase from God's book of remembrance a single one of the numberless offences you have committed against him ? How then can you escape the endless miseries of remorse ? Apply to that blood which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. Come to the cross of Christ ; for here, and only here, can you find a balm of sovereign power to heal your wounded spirit, and give your conscience perfect and everlasting peace. The Savior himself invites you : "Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. The Spirit and the bride say, come ; let him that heareth say, come ; let him that is athirst come ; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

5. But a *cordial acceptance* of these invitations is indispensable to the sinner's salvation. Here is a sovereign remedy ; but can it, without being applied, heal the diseases of sin ? The banquet of the Gospel is spread before you ; but if you refuse to taste, must you not famish for ever ? Can a physician cure the patient that will not follow his prescriptions ? Can food untasted refresh the body, or light unseen charm the eye, or music unheard regale the ear ?

Consider then the absolute necessity of purifying your conscience by an

actual application of atoning blood. If the blood of Christ does not here purge your conscience from dead works, can you reasonably expect to serve and enjoy God for ever in heaven? Can you, with a heart unsanctified, and a conscience unappeased, be happy any where under the reign of Jehovah? Have you then forgotten the great, immutable law of his empire—" *The soul that sinneth, it shall die?*" Can you, under such a law, ever be happy in your sins? Happy while cherishing the deathless worm of remorse in your bosom! Happy while drinking at the fountain of all the miseries in the universe! Alas! can a man take fire in his bosom, and not be burned? Can the dead share the pleasures of life? Can the deaf enjoy the melodies of music; or the blind gaze on the sublime and beautiful scenery of nature? While blind to the glories of a Savior, a stranger to the transforming power of his Gospel, and dead in trespasses and sins; can such a man, without a radical change of character, avert for ever the stings of remorse, or relish the holy enjoyments of religion?

True, you may even in your sins enjoy a kind of happiness in a world of probation through which God is pouring the full tide of his temporal and spiritual favors. You may here gaze with delight on the beauties of nature and art; you may taste all the sweets of society, friendship, and domestic life. If remorse corrodes, you may mitigate its pangs by a thousand objects. You may frequent places of gay and fashionable resort; you may plunge into the vortex of sensual pleasures; you may engross your mind with the cares of life, and the perplexities of business; you may regale your taste with the flowers of literature, or feast your intellect on the banquet of science, or cheer your heart with all the sweet reciprocities of friendship and domestic affection. Oh! there is in these a siren charm to lull asleep the bitter recollections and dark forebodings of guilt! But scenes far more congenial to remorse and despair are fast approaching. And in that lone land where no rills of mercy flow; where no ray of hope glimmers on the blackness of darkness for ever; where no ties of kindred, no sweets of friendship, no endearments of home are known; where no song of mirth is heard, no object of beauty strikes the eye, no pleasures of sense allure the taste; where nothing is found to sooth remorse, or alleviate despair; but every thing conspires to turn the mind upon its own guilty recollections, and fill the whole soul with a sense of its past and still increasing guilt;—can the sinner be happy there? Does he then dream of being happy in his sins? Alas! he may one day wake from this delusive dream to all the dread realities of endless, hopeless, unmitigated remorse. God grant that he may awake before he reaches that world where he will find no atoning Savior, no sanctifying Spirit, no balm of Gilead for the wounds of sin. His conscience may here sleep awhile; but it cannot sleep for ever. In the

hour of death, if not before, it may awake like that of the phrensied Altamont; and in eternity it must and will awake in tenfold rage, to kindle those fires which shall never be quenched.

"Look round, and see those numbers infinite,
That stand before the throne, and in their hands
Palms waving high, as token of victory
For battles won—these are the sons of men
Redeemed, the ransomed of the Lamb of God:
All these—their virtue, beauty, excellence,
And joy, are purchase of redeeming blood;
Their glory, bounty of redeeming love.

"O love divine! harp, lift thy voice on high!
Shout, angels! shout aloud, ye sons of men!
And burn, my heart, with the eternal flame!
My lyre, be eloquent with endless praise!
O love divine! immeasurable love!
Stooping from heaven to earth, from earth to hell,
Without beginning, endless, boundless love!
Above all asking, giving far to those
Who naught deserved, who naught deserved but death.
Sating the vilest! saving me! O love
Divine! O Savior God! O Lamb, once slain!
At thought of thee, thy love, thy flowing blood,
All thoughts decay; all things remembered, fade;
All hopes return; all actions done by men
Or angels, disappear, absorbed and lost:
All fly—as from the great white throne, which he,
The prophet, saw, in vision wrapt—the heavens
And earth, and sun, and moon, and starry host,
Confounded fled, and found a place no more."

